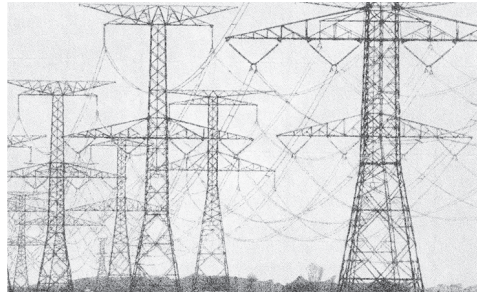




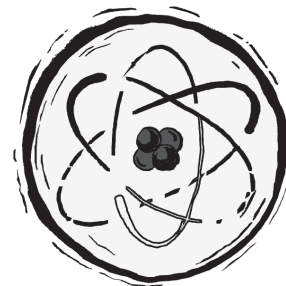
# State Representative Larry Haler

## NUCLEAR POWER

I took the lead this year in proposing two bills dealing with nuclear power. The first bill asks Congress to consider the Energy Northwest nuclear power plant (WNP-2) in Richland a test facility for generating hydrogen. This bill passed the House on a 98-0 vote, becoming the first nuclear power-related bill to not only receive a committee hearing but also pass (on a bipartisan vote) in the state House in 20 years. Since it was held up in the Senate, this is legislation I will continue to promote during the next legislative session.



There is hope that at the end of a long period of anti-nuclear sentiment in our state, our nation's energy crisis may allow science rather than emotion to lead ultimately to approval of the second bill, which asked Congress to designate the Hanford site as a location for building and operating a fourth-generation nuclear power generation station.



## Representative Larry Haler

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- Children & Family Services
- Economic Development, Agriculture & Trade

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### State government on the Internet:

[www.access.wa.gov](http://www.access.wa.gov)

# State Representative Larry Haler 2006 Session Report

## 8th Legislative District

Dear Friends,

When I was sworn in as your representative in 2004 one of my priorities was to advocate the expansion of WSU Tri-Cities into a full-fledged four-year university. The legislative part of that mission has now been accomplished, thanks primarily to overwhelming community support that was instrumental in helping me make our case in Olympia.

The WSU breakthrough was for me the highlight of the 2006 legislative session, which also brought great progress for children and families, such as new laws that will better protect our children from sex predators, add early learning to our educational system, and restore recreational opportunities by repealing the day-use fee at state parks.

At the same time, however, I'm concerned about the long-term effects of the legislative majority's approval of the largest spending increase in state history. I'm also disappointed that several of the economic development measures I sponsored, notably bills granting tax exemptions and tax credits, were rejected. Letting people keep more of their money is good for the economy.

I hope you can take a few minutes to read this report about some of the legislation considered this session, particularly new laws directly related to the 8th Legislative District. As all 98 seats in the House of Representatives are up for election later this year, state law limits me to this one report until after the election. Fortunately, the law allows me to still answer specific questions, so keep the e-mails, letters and phone calls coming! Also, I'll be out around our district this summer and fall and would be delighted to meet and speak with you. Be sure to contact me if you think I can help you with an issue or concern involving state government.

Sincerely,



State Representative  
**Larry Haler**  
P.O. Box 40600  
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**2006 Session Report**

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# State Representative Larry Haler

# 2006 Session Report

## AT LAST, A FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY!

As a member of the Richland City Council in 1989 I welcomed the opening of what was then known as the Tri-Cities University Center. And like many of us I hoped it was the first step toward a full-fledged four-year university for our area. That hope will become a reality thanks to House Bill 2867, which will have WSU Tri-Cities admitting freshmen and sophomores starting in fall 2007.



Solid community support was the biggest factor in the WSU breakthrough, and I don't have space here to name all of those who so richly deserve credit. Some bipartisan backing helped too – while community support was building last year, I reached over to the Democrat chairwoman of the House Higher Education Committee

and convinced her to have the committee meet at the Tri-Cities campus last September. That led to her introducing HB 2867 when the Legislature met this year, with me as the bill's lead sponsor from the Republican side.

Southeast Washington has higher education needs, and the Mid-Columbia clearly has the resources and talents to meet those needs – we just needed the go-ahead. A full-fledged four-year university also is a cornerstone of the effort to ensure a prosperous future for our communities as work at Hanford is scaled back. The law authorizing us to move forward and make good on the theme of “bridging the future” is without a doubt the highlight of the 2006 legislative session.

## WE CAN IMPROVE ON THE WASL!

Regardless of what you or I think of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), one thing's for sure: It's not inexpensive for schools to administer. And the cost went up after the Legislature last year decided students should have up to four opportunities for retakes. (This year's 10th-graders, the first class that must meet the WASL state standards as a condition of receiving a certificate of achievement at graduation, will have their first chance to retake all or part of the test in August.)

Our area's history is rooted in the search for new ways to do things, so one of our local school boards and I asked the question: Why not explore alternatives to the WASL, applying the knowledge gained over 10 years of WASL testing? That led to my introducing House Bill 2414, which was recently signed into law. It will let six school districts use an assessment other than the WASL to gauge the math and reading performance of students in third, fifth, sixth and eighth grades. I'm expecting this pilot project will turn up assessments that are just as effective, if not better, and more affordable.



## WATER FOR THE QUAD CITIES

As a member of the House Economic Development, Agriculture and Trade Committee I was in an ideal position to make sure the Quad Cities' water needs are addressed in the Columbia River Basin water resource management bill the Legislature passed.

I wasn't going to play the Quad Cities' needs against any of the others who need Columbia Basin water, like growers, industry, fish and those who rely on fish. But I also wasn't about to give certain groups west of the Cascades the final say over who gets what. There is much more work to do on water policy – like on the issue of water-rights relinquishment – but this is a good start. If all sides, including the Department of Ecology, are willing to uphold not only the letter but the spirit of this new law, it holds great promise for people on our side of the Cascades.



*It's been a great honor to serve as your representative this term and make so much progress on behalf of our district.*

## A GREEN LIGHT FOR 'GREEN' ENERGY

This session I secured legislative approval for House Bill 1384, which gives joint operating agencies a potentially lower-cost option for building and operating renewable energy projects. Energy Northwest, which operates WNP-2 north of Richland and plans to build an electricity generating facility at Kalama, is the only such joint operating agency in the state.

## BUDGET CONCERNS



I learned a lot about budgeting in 15 years as a city council member and mayor, which led me to oppose the supplemental budget proposed (and ultimately adopted) by majority Democrats.

First, the supplemental budget squandered a golden opportunity to get caught up on payments to the state employee pension funds. It's a pay-now-or-pay-more-later situation, and this new budget doesn't go far enough to get us back on track.

Second, the budgets we developed at the city were available for public comment for a month or more before they came for a council vote. Compare that to what the legislative majorities did in the House and Senate this year: each rushed a budget through from public unveiling to passage within three days. An approach like that certainly doesn't encourage public examination of the budget, and it's not what I would call “transparent” government.

Finally, the supplemental budget adopted this session represents the largest spending increase in state history – it's more than \$4 billion higher than the budget adopted in 2004. The decision to commit nearly all of the anticipated surplus revenue by shifting much of it into unprotected, earmarked accounts did not allow for saving for a rainy day. It would have been much better to hold the line on new spending, sock away most the surplus in one big “rainy day” fund and approve tax relief to keep our economy going.

## HELP FOR OUR ECONOMY

This session I built on the economic development successes of 2005 (bringing money back to finance a PNNL-WSU bioproducts facility, and for PNNL infrastructure) as lead Republican sponsor of a bill supporting an industry “cluster” approach. This legislation became law, but several other economy-friendly tax policy proposals I sponsored fell into the “unfinished business” category. These included a job-creation tax credit, a property tax exemption for nonprofit small business incubators, a worker training business and occupation tax credit and a telecommunications/Internet service tax exemption.

